

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee

BILL: CS/CS/SB 434

INTRODUCER: Children, Families, and Elder Affairs, Education Pre-K-12, and Senator Sobel and others

SUBJECT: Suicide Prevention Education

DATE: March 26, 2010

REVISED: _____

| | ANALYST | STAFF DIRECTOR | REFERENCE | ACTION |
|----|----------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1. | Carrouth | Matthews | ED | Fav/CS |
| 2. | Preston | Walsh | CF | Fav/CS |
| 3. | | | EA | |
| 4. | | | | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

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|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE..... | <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> | Statement of Substantial Changes |
| B. AMENDMENTS..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical amendments were recommended |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Amendments were recommended |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Significant amendments were recommended |

I. Summary:

The bill requires that beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, district school boards must provide access to educational resources regarding suicide prevention, as approved by the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention, to all instructional and administrative personnel. The bill also changes the membership on the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council.

This bill amends sections 14.20195 and 1006.07 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy

In 2008, suicide was the third leading cause of death for Florida's youth ages 15-24.¹ One of the state's long-term goals is to decrease the incidence of teen suicide in Florida by one-third, from approximately 9.5 per 100,000 in 2001 to approximately 6.3 per 100,000 by the end of 2010.²

¹ Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition. See http://www.floridasuicideprevention.org/the_facts.htm. (Last visited March 23, 2010).

Florida's strategy for suicide prevention includes school interventions. Schools in partnership with families and communities are in a unique position to identify youth at risk of suicide. Prevention, education, intervention and follow-up are keys to reducing the number of young people who take their own lives.³ Schools offer both the opportunity for recognition of suicide ideation⁴ and a process for response. At school, students have the greatest exposure to potential responders such as teachers, counselors, coaches, staff and classmates who have the opportunity to help.⁵

Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council

The Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council was created within the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention within the Executive Office of the Governor, to develop strategies for preventing suicide.⁶ Responsibilities of the Council include:

- Advising the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention regarding the development of a statewide plan for suicide prevention, with the guiding principle being that suicide is a preventable problem;
- Assembling an ad hoc advisory committee comprised of members from outside the council, if necessary, in order for the council to receive advice and assistance in carrying out its responsibilities; and
- Making findings and recommendations regarding suicide prevention programs and activities.⁷

The council is required to submit an annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1, 2008, and each year thereafter.⁸

School Community Professional Development Act

The School Community Professional Development Act established under s. 1012.98, F.S., requires each school district to develop a professional development system to include in-service activities for instructional personnel, one component of which requires a focus on classroom management, parent involvement, and school safety.

According to the Florida Department of Education, student personnel services staff⁹ identified under s. 1012.01(2)(b), F.S., are responsible for addressing personal and social adjustment needs

² *Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy*, 2005-2010, Office of Drug Control, Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention, Executive Office of the Governor, January 2005 at p. I. See <http://www.flgov.com/pdfs/SP-FlaSuicidePreventionStrategy.pdf>. (Last visited March 23, 2010).

³ *Id.* at p. 4-11.

⁴ Suicide ideation is the process of fantasizing, planning, practicing, and motivating oneself to commit suicide. *Id.* at pp. 2-3 and 2-16.

⁵ *Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy*, 2005-2010, Office of Drug Control, Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention, Executive Office of the Governor, January 2005 at p. 4-11. See <http://www.flgov.com/pdfs/SP-FlaSuicidePreventionStrategy.pdf>. (Last visited March 23, 2010).

⁶ s. 14.20195, F.S.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

of students, providing suicide prevention and awareness training and resources to students and staff, consulting with other school personnel regarding social-emotional concerns, and providing direct intervention support for students with mental health needs, including those students who are at risk for suicide.¹⁰ These staff members, although equipped professionally to address adolescent mental health issues, often do not interact with most students on a daily basis.

Based on information provided by the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention,¹¹ nine out of ten adolescents who die by suicide give clues to someone before they attempt. School personnel interact with students on a daily basis and may notice changes in student behavior or attitude. According to the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention, many suicidal students will likely go to a teacher or coach before they go to a school counselor, yet teachers and coaches lack the training necessary to deal with these issues.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill would require that, beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, each school district shall provide access to suicide prevention education for all instructional and administrative personnel using resources approved by the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention.¹² Appropriate training of school staff who work most closely with students may increase their awareness of student behaviors associated with thoughts of harming themselves and may reduce the number of youth suicides.

The Committee Substitute amends the membership on the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council by replacing representatives from the Alzheimer's Association and from Volunteer Florida with representatives from the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention and from the National Council for Suicide Prevention.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

⁹ Student personnel services staff include guidance counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers.

¹⁰ Department of Education, bill analysis, November 10, 2009, on file with the committee.

¹¹ The Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention is located in the Office of the Governor. See http://www.flgov.com/suicide_prevention_toolkit. (Last visited March 23, 2010).

¹² The Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention makes available on its website links to numerous free, online training opportunities for teachers and administrators. The office especially recommends two training opportunities: *Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention* and *Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention*. The training opportunities are available at: <http://www.helppromotehope.com/resources/schools.php>.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Depending on which educational resources are selected by the school district, there may be an indeterminate fiscal impact to school districts. However, the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention offers many educational training opportunities or resources for free.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)**CS by the Pre-K – 12 Education Committee on March 17, 2010.**

The Committee Substitute clarifies that the suicide prevention educational resources, as approved by the Office of Suicide Prevention, will be provided to all instructional and administrative personnel as part of the school district's professional development system.

CS by the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee on March 26, 2010.

The Committee Substitute amends the membership on the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council by replacing a representative from the Alzheimer's Association and from Volunteer Florida with representatives from the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention and from the National Council for Suicide Prevention.

B. Amendments:

None.